

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4, 10 and 14 have been amended, and claims 8, 9 and 17-24 have been canceled herein. Hence, claims 1-7 and 10- 16 are currently pending. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in light of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

Sections 1-2 of the office action rejected claims 1, 16, 17, 20 and 23 under 35 USC 102(b). Claims 17, 20 and 23 have been canceled. Independent claim 1, upon which claim 16 depends, has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 8 and 9, which have accordingly been canceled. Claim 1 therefore is intended to represent claim 9 in independent form. Sections 6-7 of the office action noted that claim 9 would be allowable if placed in independent form.

Applicants therefore believe all of the rejections under 35 USC 102 have been overcome.

Claim Objections

Section 3 of the office action objected to claim 4 due to an informal error. Claim 4 has been amended as suggested in the office action, thus overcoming the objection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

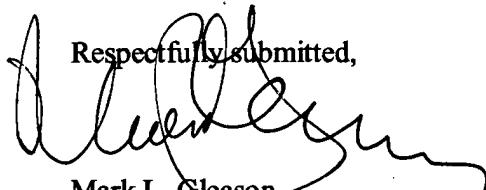
Sections 4-5 of the office action rejected claims 2-8, 18, 19, 21, 22 and 24 under 35 USC 103(a). Since each of these claims ultimately depends from claim 1, they are patentable for at least the reasons noted above.

Allowable Subject Matter

Sections 6-7 of the office action objected to claims 9-15 as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but noted that these claims would be allowable if placed in independent form. Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 8 and 9, effectively placing claim 9 in independent form. Claims 17-24 have been canceled without prejudice to presentation in a continuing application. The remaining claims all ultimately depend on claim 1. Applicants therefore submit that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

As evidenced by the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants have made a genuine effort to respond to each issue raised in the office action. All of the pending claims are believed to be proper for allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at 952.474.3701 with any questions, comments or suggestions relating to the referenced patent application.


Respectfully submitted,

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